

Overcoming Suffering by Faith in God

A resolution of the Nebraska Association of Regular Baptist Churches

WHEREAS the very existence of suffering causes some to deny God;

AND WHEREAS the character of God is attacked because of this existence of suffering;

AND WHEREAS the Word of God is rejected in light of this suffering;

Therefore be it resolved that we the messengers in fellowship with the Nebraska Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting for our 51st Annual Fall Bible Conference at the First Baptist Church in Nebraska City, Nebraska, October 13-14, 2008, will stand with, cling to, and believe in God and His Word that we might overcome suffering.

FIRST, the existence of suffering is a direct result of sin which entered by the choice of man against the Word of God (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12). Because of that choice the curses of sin has touched every part of man and “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: (Romans 8:22). Suffering should not cause man to deny God but instead to recognize his weakness and need of God.

God through Christ has made suffering temporal (Revelation 21:3,4) and “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Suffering cannot separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39). Through faith in what Christ has suffered to put away sin once for all (Hebrews 9:24-26), we have the assurance of eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12).

SECONDLY, the existence of suffering does not negate the truths of Psalm 100 concerning God’s character. The LORD, He is God (Psalm 100:3). Whether it be man suffering for his own wrong doing (1 Peter 2:20), or man suffering the chastisement of a heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:6, 11), or man suffering for God’s glory (John 9:3; 11:4), the Lord, He is God! “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The LORD, He is good (Psalm 100:5). It is the goodness of God that leadeth man to repentance (Romans 2:4). “Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way” (Psalm 25:8). God’s goodness is seen in His provision of Christ the Savior of men (1 John 4:14), and in His provision of Christ the High Priest (Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16).

THIRDLY, the existence of suffering does not nullify the reality of God’s Word. God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). God, in His Word, reveals His plan to deal with sin and suffering in this world (Ephesians 1:4-10). God, in His Word, says to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3). God, in His Word, tells us to be overcomers (Romans 12:21; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). God, in His Word, tells us to be “strong in the Lord” and to “put on the whole armor of God” because of the adversary we face (Ephesians 6:10-17).

The fact is “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). God’s truth gives us faith, and God’s truth grows our faith. God does not promise to remove suffering from the believer in this present world, but does promise never to be removed from the believer (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 15:5; Isaiah 41:10, 13).

God’s truth says “My grace is sufficient for thee.” May we say with Paul, “when I am weak, then I am strong” (II Corinthians 12:9-10). May we be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).